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ABSTRACT

Two survey studies were conducted to determine what rural and small school personnel perceived as their communication, information, and consultive needs in the area of career guidance materials and practices, and how these needs best could be met. For the first survey a questionnaire was sent to 7,618 schools which asked about awareness of career information, how that awareness came about, and the usefulness of certain communication means for increasing awareness of career information. The second survey instrument sent to 500 schools and agencies focused on identifying specific career guidance information needs of rural educators that could be met through a variety of communications techniques or services. Recipients of both surveys included administrators, teachers, counselors, coordinators of pupil personnel services, coordinator/directors of guidance and/or career education, and curriculum coordinators. Respondents from both samples identified a lack of awareness of current methods, materials, and resources necessary to plan and implement comprehensive and effective career guidance programs. It was concluded that current and future rural school-focused career guidance information activities should provide at least the following services: packets of information on current career development materials, toll-free telephone consultation services, free consultative service by mail, newsletters, and consultants. (Survey instruments are appended.) (TA)

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Research and Development Series No. 130

CAREER GUIDANCE INFORMATION NEEDS OF RURAL AND SMALL SCHOOLS

by

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and
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Rural teachers, counselors, parents, and students continue to have a need for increased access to information, materials, resources, and assistance. While there are many information exchange systems available nationally, their accessibility and effectiveness for our nation's rural and small schools remains a question.

In an attempt to determine the actual career guidance-related information needs of rural and small school personnel a study was conducted and this report was prepared. The report provides insights into the existing needs and desires of professionals who are attempting to improve themselves and their guidance programs. It is hoped that leadership personnel at the federal, state, intermediate and local levels of education will examine the findings and ways and means of developing corrective actions. This perspective is provided so that new educational initiatives will center around the unique problems of our rural and small school personnel and will result in equal access to professional growth and guidance program renewal opportunities.

This report was prepared by staff and consultants at The Center for Vocational Education which is working in consortium with the Far West Laboratory, San Francisco, California and ERIC/CRESS, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico. Specifically, I want to extend my appreciation to Harry N. Drier who serves as the project director and who initiated and coordinated the study, Karen Kimmel who conducted the surveys and co-authored the report, and finally, James Bagby, consultant, who assisted in the data analysis and report preparation.

Our appreciation is extended to the project National Advisory Committee and all the individuals who responded to the surveys. These individuals gave freely of their time to make this report a valid contribution to the literature.

We hope you find this report accurate and useful. We solicit your comments for future improvements of the rural guidance information needs state of the art perspective.

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
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INTRODUCTION

Rural and small schools are characterized by conditions which often impede progress toward developing comprehensive career guidance programs. These conditions include isolation, limited resources, and conservatism, which are sometimes manifested in a failure to move from the status quo. Despite inherent, limiting circumstances, personnel in many rural and small schools are eager to provide the best possible career development experiences for their clientele. It behooves guidance leaders to identify the limiting conditions, to seek means for overcoming their limitations, and to share solutions with their colleagues and local administrators.

The rural setting is characterized by educational systems which do not adequately serve the career development needs of the rural population.

> Curriculum emphasis on symbolic knowledge, rather than on the real world of people and things, results in experiences which most rural students regard as irrelevant, obsolete, and ineffective (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1972).

O'Fallen and Dvok (1974) found that small schools have been slow to respond to changing societal needs because of (1) their isolation, geographically and otherwise; (2) their smallness which limits flexibility to innovate and explore; and (3) information and communication focused on local sources.

Education has been generally conservative and slow to change when compared to other disciplines. McMurrin (1971) indicates this is due to the natural conservativeness of social institutions of this nature.

It has been found that students living in rural settings and attending rural or small schools are restricted in their career development. Limiting factors include (1) geographic and cultural isolation, (2) paucity of career information, (3) limited number of occupational roles and alternatives, (4) lack of guidance staff, (5) limited resources, and (6) lack of financial support (Gehlen, 1969; Griessman and Densley, 1969; Haller, 1969; DeBlassie and Ludeman, 1973; Edington and Stans, 1973; Drier et al., 1977).

Based upon the limiting conditions cited above, it is proposed that rural youth need additional assistance in (1) understanding self in relation to others, (2) understanding the effect of societal change on their plans and expectations, (3) developing greater skills in problem solving and decision making, and (4) understanding how to more fully utilize the unique strengths of the rural community and overcome its limitations through greater use of available resources.

Resources available to the district are extremely important. Rogers and Shoemaker (1971) indicate that resources are now available (still on a somewhat limited scale) to encourage change and innovations.

Efforts have been made and continue to be exerted to provide career guidance resources for rural schools. These efforts are not restricted to endeavors by state or national institutions. Local

school districts and even some individual schools are developing materials and devising innovative practices. Differing data sources are being brought into play for finding new solutions to pressing career guidance issues.

Through extensive research and development efforts conducted by The Center for Vocational Education it has been observed that in the past, rural educators often did not use existing communication and information networks (e.g., ERIC Centers, national rural associations) that might have assisted them in their career guidance planning and development efforts. It has appeared that they tend to request, receive, and use career guidance related information and materials in a haphazard and unsystematic manner.

In addition, the literature seems to indicate that materials developed and used in local education agencies are not disseminated, and there is a need to communicate existing programs for rural implementation on a nationwide basis. Research by Development Associates (1975) and the Diffusion of Innovations Program at The Center for Vocational Education (in progress) indicates limited progress in the spread of exemplary program results to other school districts. The Development Associates found little relationship between project activities and efforts to disseminate results.

As new developments emerge and as additional rural and small schools strive to improve career guidance programs, the necessity for organized means to exchange information becomes more intense. A comprehensive literature analysis (Drier et al., 1977) revealed that rural schools have limited expertise in information dissemination. Further, the need to communicate information on how to implement career guidance programs in rural settings exists nationwide.

It is because of this lack of communication of career guidance materials and practices in rural schools that two survey studies were conducted. The basic purpose of these studies was to determine what rural and small school personnel perceived as their communication, information and consultive needs and how they thought these needs could be best met if available.

METHODOLOGY

The need to communicate career guidance information to rural school personnel has often been identified as a national problem. In order to define further this need, two national surveys were conducted to identify the perceived needs of rural educators. The first survey, conducted in January 1977, was designed to determine the need for a rural career guidance communication network. A second survey was planned to delineate more specifically potential uses of such a network. The development and administration of the second survey was contingent upon findings of the first one. The initial survey results strongly supported the need for a national communication network, and the second survey, therefore, was conducted in October 1977.

The sampling frame for the first survey was a listing of the 7,868 rural and small schools in the United States. This list was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. However, because of mailing address limitations connected with the list the total 7,868 schools approximately 50 were not included in the sampling frame. Additionally, since only rural schools were being surveyed, the list was purged of another 200 small schools located in large urban areas, leaving a total number of schools in the study approximating 7,618.

The following procedure was used to select the sample on the first survey. Six schools in each state were selected (total n=300) through a systematic random sampling technique. This process resulted in representative distribution of schools across each state. One of the limitations of this procedure was that in two states there were less than six rural schools listed. In those cases, all eligible schools were included in the sample. In order to assure the desired sample size, the remaining allotments were selected from states with the largest number of rural schools.

A cover letter, the instrument, a project brochure, and a return prepaid envelope were mailed to the identified schools. The questionnaire asked about awareness of career information, how that awareness came about, and the usefulness of certain communications means for increasing awareness of career information. The instrument used in the initial survey is presented in Appendix A. A total of 103 usable responses (34 percent) was returned.

Since the subjects were not asked to identify themselves, no follow-up procedures were utilized in this study.

The second study was an expansion of the first one; therefore, rural schools which participated in the first survey were eliminated from the sampling frame. A random sample of 300 rural schools was chosen by using a random number table. In addition a random sample (n=200) of the 1900 intermediate education agencies that serve rural schools was selected. The instrument focused upon identifying specific career guidance information needs of rural educators that could be met through a variety of communications techniques or services. The instrument is presented in Appendix B.

The instrument and a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey were mailed to the 500 schools and agencies. Useable responses were received from 144 individuals (20 percent). A follow-up of nonrespondents was not conducted since survey forms were returned anonymously.

Recipients of both surveys included administrators, teachers, counselors, coordinators of pupil personnel services, coordinator/directors of guidance and/or career education, and curriculum coordinators.

FINDINGS

A preliminary report of data obtained from the initial survey was prepared, but distribution of that report was withheld in order to be included with findings of the second survey. A more meaningful interpretation of the two surveys is fostered by examining the two sets of data together. The results of each survey are presented in turn.

The initial substantive question asked of the first survey's participants was whether or not they were currently using career guidance materials developed outside of their school district. Ninty-three percent of the responders indicated that they use such career guidance materials. The number of materials they are using varied greatly. Some persons reported that they were using only two or three items while others indicated that they were using a great number of materials. The majority of the respondents indicated that they were using books, films, and kits. Other respondents noted that they were also using microfiche, microfilm, curriculum guides, cassette tapes, brochures, pamphlets, and assessment instruments.

In response to the question, "Do you feel that you and others in your school are sufficiently aware of current career guidance materials and methods available nationally?" the majority of individuals indicated that they were not fully aware of current career guidance materials and methods. Sixty-four percent of the responders indicated that they were not sufficiently aware, while 36 percent felt that they were. Some reasons given for not being totally aware were a lack of . . .

access to a clearinghouse, large university, or large school district;

internal communications system;

understanding of school personnel roles in career guidance;

access to convenient reference to new developments;

understanding of career education;

financial resources to purchase current materials;

adequate communication network on information about materials for incorporation into subject areas;

coordination of materials and programs within a school;

information about commercially produced materials;

awareness of career information on the part of students, parents, and community;

written information on the availability of career guidance materials.

The methods by which the respondents learned of career guidance materials are presented in Table 1. An examination of the table draws attention to the importance of state departments of education as the major providers of career guidance information to rural educators. Journals and newsletters are also perceived as key information sources. It is not surprising that national conventions serve a limited role in conveying career guidance information to rural school personnel. These personnel find it difficult, if not impossible, to attend national conventions due to limited financial support and multiple demands on their professional time.

The survey questionnaire provided opportunities for respondents to note additional methods. These additions are listed under "others" in the table.

TABLE 1

Sources of Career Guidance Materials Information

Learn of Career Guidance Materials Through:	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
1. State Departments of Education	88	85%
2. Journals	74	72%
3. Newsletters	73	71%
4. Commercial Firms	57	55%
5. Other Educators	54	52%
6. Local Conferences	53	51%
7. Universities	49	48%
8. State Conventions	48	47%
9. State Associations	37	36%
10. National Associations	30	29%
11. National Conventions	8	7%
12. Others:		
Private Enterprise	2	2%
Guidance Division—Main Office	1	1%
Area Coordinator	2	2%
County Vocational Personnel	1	1%
Library Services	1	1%
U.S. Services	1	1%
Local Counselors Group	1	1%

Another question asked what communication services and materials the respondents would use if they were made available. Table 2 presents a breakdown of the responses.

Five of the nine cues were selected by the majority of the participants. It can be observed that each cue was chosen by a significant portion of the responders. These data suggest that a variety of communication services is desired by rural educators.

The two most frequently selected choices were career guidance information packets and toll-free telephone consultation services. The least frequently selected option was area consultants at local school costs. It may be noted that local costs of services strongly influenced the responders' selections. Limited financial resources in rural areas prohibits utilization by some schools or a full range of communications services.

TABLE 2

Desired Communication Services and Materials

Type of Service/Materials	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
1. Packets of information on career development materials	72	70%
2. Toll-free telephone consultation service	66	64%
3. List of nearby rural guidance demonstration sites	63	61%
4. Newsletters	60	58%
5. Audiovisual presentation on promising career development practices	57	55%
6. Regional workshops	50	49%
7. Monographs on guidance issues	41	40%
8. List of national rural guidance demonstration sites	21	20%
9. Area consultants at local school cost	17	16%

An attempt was made to identify the types of information and/or materials educators would want to learn about through a communication network. Displayed in Table 3 is a summary of responses. The percent of responders who selected each of the fourteen options is recorded.

Career guidance counseling and placement materials developed by rural schools were considered of greatest value to rural educators. Ideas for implementing career guidance activities were perceived

to be highly important, also. All fourteen types of informational materials were deemed important as indicated by survey responses. In fact, each type was chosen by at least 26 percent of the responders.

TABLE 3

Types of Information/Materials Desired
Through a Communication Network

Interested in Learning About:	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
1. Career guidance, counseling, and placement materials developed by other rural schools	78	76%
2. Materials or ideas for implementing career guidance in the classroom	71	70%
3. Materials developed by State Departments of Education	59	57%
4. Staff development information on how to integrate career guidance, counseling, and placement program	59	57%
5. Materials developed by career education directors in rural schools	59	57%
6. Community relations materials for rural schools	48	47%
7. Materials developed by the U.S. Office of Education	48	47%
8. Materials developed by national research and development centers	46	45%
9. Ideas for a placement program	40	39%
10. Materials developed by commercial firms	39	38%
11. Materials developed by the National Institute of Education	36	35%
12. Materials or ideas for implementing career guidance in the community	33	32%
13. Materials developed by national associations	31	30%
14. Materials or ideas for implementing career guidance in the home	27	26%

The respondents were asked to provide any additional advice that they thought would be helpful to the development of a rural guidance communication network. Most participants chose not to respond. Some responses repeated information elicited in other portions of the survey. Helpful suggestions which emerged follow.

Models

Effective models for systematic, well organized career guidance programs (K-12) could be communicated through such a network. Emphasis was placed on models for elementary school programs.

Materials—Evaluation

Concise guidelines for reviewing career guidance materials—both commercially and non-commercially produced—were mentioned as helpful information that could be provided through the network. Criteria for selecting appropriate materials were desired, also.

Staff Development

It was suggested that attention be given to preparing local or area personnel to conduct in-service activities and workshops. Further linkages for a communication network would thus be established.

Results from the second survey amplify and refine the initial survey data. For example, the second survey instrument asked responders to indicate the type of career guidance information they would like to obtain through communication services given high priority in the earlier survey.

The first item focused on a toll-free telephone service and the mail as potential communication modes. Twenty general topics or types of information were presented in the item. The number and percent of responders who selected each topic or type of information are shown in Table 4. Strategies for infusing career guidance into the curriculum was the most frequently selected response. This item was selected by 63 percent of the responders. Other topics about which at least half the survey participants indicated a desire for information were planning comprehensive career guidance and counseling programs, implementing comprehensive career guidance and counseling programs, student career guidance materials, materials developed by other schools, and models of comprehensive career guidance programs. Each topic or type of information presented in the questionnaire item was selected by at least 25 percent of the responders.

Responders noted, in addition, needs for information about the following topics: financial aid and scholarships, job outlooks and labor trends, follow-up procedures, and post-secondary offerings for various occupations.

Responders were asked to indicate from a list of six sources of information those to which referrals would be helpful to them personally. The percent of responses to each item in the list are shown in Table 5. Sixty percent of the responders desired to know of rural and small schools with effective career guidance programs. At least 24 percent of the responders indicated interest in each source of information.

Outcomes on the next item confirm results of the initial survey. Information packets were perceived as the most valuable communication service to rural and small schools. This delivery mode was given the highest ranking by the greatest number of responders. The delivery mode which received the second greatest number of the highest ranking was a toll-free telephone line.

TABLE 4

Information Desired Through the Mail or Through a Toll-Free Telephone Service

Information	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Strategies for infusing career guidance into curriculum	90	63%
Planning comprehensive career guidance and counseling programs	86	60%
Implementing comprehensive career guidance and counseling programs	85	59%
Student career guidance materials	79	55%
Materials developed by other schools	78	54%
Models of comprehensive career guidance programs	72	50%
Possibilities for getting career guidance efforts funded	65	45%
Ideas for school-community cooperation	63	44%
Techniques for involving parents in the career development of youth	62	43%
Research on rural and small schools	61	42%
Research on rural and small school youth	61	42%
Ideas for a career counseling program	60	42%
Evaluating comprehensive career guidance and counseling programs	54	38%
Ideas for a placement program	53	37%
Innovative career guidance practices	53	37%
Planning and operating career resource centers	49	34%
Strategies for staff development programs	44	31%
Conducting local career development needs assessment	40	28%
Assessing local resources	38	26%
Guidance legislation (state, federal)	36	25%

TABLE 5

Referrals Desired Through the Mail and/or Through a Toll-Free Telephone Service

Referral to	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Rural and small schools with effective programs	87	60%
Inservice opportunities	69	48%
Information Centers (e.g., ERIC)	45	31%
Counselor education programs	42	29%
State agencies (education, employment, etc.)	40	28%
Potential consultants	35	24%

In the first survey, participants were asked only to identify services they considered useful; whereas, in the latter survey, responders were asked to rank order the services. A comparison of data from the two surveys shows that information packets, toll-free telephone line, and demonstration program information are perceived repeatedly to be of great value by a large number of responders.

The percent of responses for each of the six services as determined by the second survey is given in Table 6. The average rank given to each service is shown in Table 7. Information packets received the highest average rank; consultant listing, the lowest. The other four services received fairly similar average ranks.

TABLE 6

Ranks of Information Delivery Modes

Delivery Modes	RANKS					
	Highest 1	2	3	4	5	Lowest 6
Toll-free telephone line	22%	7%	16%	16%	15%	24%
Workshops	17%	23%	18%	13%	20%	9%
Newsletters	9%	21%	18%	23%	18%	11%
Information packet	35%	17%	26%	14%	6%	2%
Consultant listing	3%	7%	9%	18%	23%	40%
Demonstration programs	17%	27%	12%	16%	16%	12%

TABLE 7

Average Rank of Information Delivery Modes

Delivery Mode	Average Rank
Information packet	2.4
Workshops	3.2
Demonstration programs	3.2
Newsletters	3.5
Toll-free telephone line	3.7
Consultant listing	4.7

The next item addressed newsletters. Responders were asked to indicate the types of information they would like to see in newsletters provided through a communication network. Six types of information were presented for ranking. Table 8 shows the participants' responses. An examination of Table 9 reveals the items in priority order from highest to lowest importance based on average ranks. It can be seen that responders consider innovative career guidance activities/ideas used in rural schools to be information of greatest interest for inclusion in newsletters.

Announcements of fellowships and announcements of inservice opportunities were additional items suggested by responders for inclusion in newsletters.

TABLE 8

Desired Newsletter Contents: Percent of Responses

Information	RANKS 1	2	3	4	5	6
Innovative career guidance activities/ideas used in schools	49%	20%	17%	2%	6%	6%
Announcements of upcoming conferences, seminars, workshops on the topics of career guidance	10%	9%	17%	17%	27%	20%
Announcements of free materials	16%	22%	29%	13%	9%	11%
References to new materials on the market	10%	12%	18%	28%	21%	11%
Innovative ideas for career guidance programs	17%	39%	13%	18%	10%	3%
Information about preservice training programs	6%	3%	10%	18%	24%	29%

TABLE 9

Desired Newsletter Contents: Average Ranks

Information	Average Ranks
Innovative career guidance activities/ideas used in rural schools	2.2
Innovative ideas for career guidance programs	2.8
Announcements of free materials	3.1
References to new materials on the market	3.7
Announcements of upcoming conferences, seminars, workshops, on the topic career guidance	4.0
Information about preservice training programs	4.7

Information packets were suggested as another potential communication service. In order to determine responders' feeling about the contents of information packets, a list of seven types of materials was presented for ranking. Data reveal that brief descriptions of materials developed by rural schools, and student handout materials were perceived as the most desirable items for inclusion in such packets. Participants' responses to each item are illustrated in Table 10. The average ranks of items are given in priority order in Table 11. In addition to items listed in the survey, responders suggested that information about market demand in specific career areas, materials for duplication, and examples of hands-on activities for teachers, be included.

TABLE 10

Desired Information Packet Contents: Percent of Responses

Information	RANKS						
	Highest 1	2	3	4	5	6	Lowest 7
Brochures on new career guidance materials	17%	22%	17%	13%	10%	9%	11%
Brief descriptions of materials developed by rural schools	36%	24%	16%	13%	7%	4%	0%
Posters	1%	10%	17%	17%	32%	14%	9%
Bulletin board materials/ideas	7%	15%	20%	29%	16%	9%	4%
Book marks	0%	1%	4%	3%	10%	33%	49%
Student handout materials	37%	25%	17%	15%	3%	3%	0%
Directories (rural schools, consultants)	4%	3%	10%	12%	13%	23%	35%

TABLE 11

Desired Information Packet Contents: Average Ranks

Information	Average Rank
Student handout materials	2.3
Brief descriptions of materials developed by rural schools	2.4
Brochures on new career guidance materials	3.5
Bulletin board materials/ideas	3.7
Posters	4.5
Directories (rural school, consultants)	5.2
Bookmarks	6.2

One questionnaire item elicited ways in which educators would use consultants identified in their geographic area. Three priority ways were to be listed by each respondent. The following synthesis of responses treats the ways mentioned repeatedly by survey participants.

Inservice Education

Inservice education was the consultant use given highest priority. Various target groups were specified. These groups included teachers, school administrators, counselors, local and intermediate district administrators. Suggested topics to be addressed through inservice efforts included infusing career education into the curriculum, program planning, and sources of career information.

Workshops

Short-term, specialized sessions focusing upon topics designed to increase skills in various needed competencies related to career guidance program planning and implementation were suggested. Responses implied a lack of expertise at the local level, or in some instances at the intermediate district level, to conduct skill-building workshops.

Program Planning and Implementation

A need for consultants to assist educators with career guidance program planning and/or implementation was frequently mentioned. Responders felt such consultation would be effective through work with individuals while other responders suggested using consultants to work with groups of educators who have responsibilities for career guidance.

Presentations

The value of presentations by "outside experts" was recognized. The use of consultants as keynote speakers at group meetings was specified. Some survey participants also mentioned a desire for consultive assistance with program activities.

Evaluation

Technical assistance by consultants was desired for planning and conducting program evaluations. In addition to offering assistance in evaluation efforts, survey responders expressed a need to use consultants as third party evaluators.

Materials Development

A felt need for locally developed career guidance materials is apparent in many of the survey responses. A consultant's help in developing such materials was explicitly mentioned in many instances.

Resource Development

Assistance in securing program funding was considered a priority in which consultants could be used. Identification of potential funding sources and preparation of funding applications were key areas of interest.

Information Sources

Identifying and locating current and appropriate materials for program implementation were specified as problems consultants could assist in solving. Descriptions or demonstrations of exemplary program activities are examples of the types of information participants want.

Other potential ways suggested by the respondents in which consultants would be used were the following:

- Career placement
- Program management
- Assessing local resources
- Assessing needs
- Planning and operating career resource centers
- New counseling ideas
- Involvement of community
- Legislative issues
- Cooperative planning

Another communication service examined by the survey was the use of workshops. Participants were asked to select five workshop topics from a list of seven and then rank their choices in order of priority. The five topics given highest ranks are listed in Table 12. The table includes for each topic the percent of responders for each rank and the average rank.

Of the seven items, "How to communicate the program to the community" and "How to eliminate sex and racial stereotyping in the school" were judged by responders to be of least importance as workshop topics. The topic given highest rank was "How to systematicall, plan, develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive career guidance and counseling program."

TABLE 12

Workshop Topics: Percents and Average Ranks

	Highest 1	2	3	4	Lowest 5	Average Rank
How to systematically plan, develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive career guidance and counseling program	53%	15%	14%	5%	8%	1.9
Specific classroom activities for elementary, junior high, and senior high students	20%	27%	22%	11%	11%	2.6
How to provide inservice education to staff on the concepts and activities related to guidance	15%	19%	23%	23%	15%	3.0
How to plan and operate a career resource center	8%	23%	19%	22%	15%	3.2
How to effectively involve the community in a career guidance program	11%	20%	18%	20%	23%	3.3

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the surveys strongly support the conclusion that a large majority of educators in rural and small schools have a great need for increased career guidance information. Respondents from both samples identified a lack of awareness of current methods, materials, and resources necessary to plan and implement comprehensive and effective career guidance programs.

Isolation from professional growth opportunities may be a major factor which contributes to inadequate communications among rural school personnel. Internal as well as external communications can be hampered by these deficiencies. Professional exchanges among small and rural school personnel could be restricted by lack of knowledge about exemplary programs. In small schools a single counselor or an other person responsible for coordinating career guidance is professionally isolated from other individuals with similar responsibility. The opportunity for day-to-day interchange of professional information is missing but needed.

In most instances, information provided to respondents stems from state departments of education. It is evident that efforts of these state departments to meet the information needs of rural schools must be shared. Regulatory responsibilities, services to nonrural and large school systems and statewide administrative responsibilities are among the competing demands on state level personnel. The number of career guidance professional staff at the state level is limited in many cases. Additional mechanisms for communicating career guidance information and consultative services must therefore be explored.

Data received from the surveys point towards a definite need for some type of career guidance communications network for rural schools. The major reason rural educators answering the survey gave for not being sufficiently aware of career guidance materials and information was the lack of communication within and outside their school concerning the value and effectiveness of career guidance programs including materials and methods. It is clear that many of these individuals desire to use career guidance materials and information in a manner more effectively than they currently are, but need assistance in doing so.

According to the data received from the rural educators, current and future rural school focused career guidance information communication activities should provide at least the following services:

- Packets of information on current career development materials,
- Toll-free telephone consultation services,
- Free consultative service by mail,
- Newsletters, and
- Consultants.

Based upon survey results, conclusions may be drawn about the types of information that each service can deliver best. The appropriateness of each service for communiating certain types of information is discussed below.

Information Packets

An up-to-date information packet can serve a useful purpose in communicating career guidance information to rural educators. Items that would be of particular interest include a compilation of brief descriptions of materials developed by rural schools, sample copies of student handouts for use in career guidance activities, brochures describing new products, and career guidance promotional items.

Toll-Free Telephone Service

A toll-free telephone line can provide easy access to career guidance information for a large number of individuals if the telephone line is located at a center where numerous, current career guidance materials are at hand. A variety of requests can thus be fulfilled in a personalized manner. Ideas for infusing career guidance into the curriculum and other aspects of career guidance program planning and implementation are readily communicated through this service. Sources for information on these issues can be communicated expeditiously. Also, this service provides the opportunity to make referrals to individuals, groups, and organizations with career guidance expertise and resources.

Newsletters

Periodic communication with rural educators can be maintained via newsletters. This communication mode fosters current awareness of professional activities and other timely topics. In addition, brief highlights of exemplary programs likely to be of interest to a wide rural and small school audience can be communicated. Newsletters can also feature innovative career guidance activities and motivational tidbits.

Workshops

Workshops need to afford opportunities to provide information to a local or regional group of individuals who share a common concern. Concentrated attention can be given to a variety of topics designed to increase career guidance understandings and to develop program planning and implementation skills. Rural educators express great interest in workshops focusing on how to systematically plan, develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive career guidance and counseling program. Workshops are particularly appropriate for communicating complex information.

Consultants

Consultants can communicate indepth information on topics specifically prescribed by the client. Also, this communication mode accommodates immediate feedback and active interchange of ideas. The type of information to be communicated as well as the setting in which that information is communicated are limited only by the imagination and creativity of the consultant and client.

It can be concluded that a large number of communication components would be of value in the development of information systems for rural education. The data received from the survey strongly indicate that there is a felt need by rural educators for some type of communication system by which they could learn in a more timely and complete manner of effective career guidance materials and methods.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The magnitude of career guidance communication needs among rural and small schools and the complexity of potential solutions to meet those needs prompt addressing recommendations to various audiences. The development and implementation of an effective communication network requires cooperation of interested agencies such as ERIC centers, state departments of education, U.S. Office of Education, National Institute of Education, other federal agencies, and intermediate and local education agencies. This communication network should not duplicate services already available to rural areas, but should be coordinated with these efforts by taking into account the unique needs of rural populations. Organizations which already have services available to assist rural education include ERIC/CRESS, ERIC/CAPS, ERIC/CE, national rural associations, regional educational service centers, as well as several nationally focused career education information dissemination projects. The following recommendations are in part based upon the data within this research report but are also influenced by other research, development and field experiences in the area of guidance in rural and small schools by The Center for Vocational Education.

Specific recommendations are posited for consideration by various agencies.

Local Education Agencies

- Document career guidance programs/practices worthy of sharing with other rural schools.
- Develop a mechanism for internal circulation of timely career guidance information.
- Contribute to career guidance/career education newsletters and periodicals items of interest to rural schools.
- Identify career guidance information needs and seek solutions through established communication networks.
- Develop means by which nearby local education agencies can share solutions to common problems related to career guidance information.
- Compile a directory of community resources which could be used to enhance local career guidance efforts.
- Promote the acquisition and use of up-to-date career guidance information which will have positive impact on student career development.
- Encourage school personnel to submit their names to be added to mailing lists of agencies which distribute free career guidance information.
- Set time aside each day/week for searching and using current professional information.
- Assume increased responsibility for self improvement by participating in guidance and counseling professional associations.

- Purchase subscriptions to national newsletters or magazines, e.g., *Career World, Educational Daily*.
- Identify your State Department of Education Guidance and Career Education Supervisors, invite them yearly into your school and maintain phone and mail communication.
- Institute annual self renewal field trips to area schools where there appears to be a master counselor and an effective guidance program in operation.
- Identify and communicate with area counselor educators regarding specific problems or information needs.

Intermediate Education Agencies

- Foster sharing of information among local education agencies within the jurisdictions.
- Transmit career guidance information to schools and local district personnel.
- Conduct skill building workshops for local school personnel.
- Provide consultative assistance to local school districts.
- Communicate to schools career related materials and services offered by public and private agencies within the jurisdiction.
- Explore possibilities of offering university courses on career guidance within the jurisdiction.
- Develop increased cooperative relationships with State Department of Education personnel for the purpose of utilizing their resources for rural schools.
- Develop guidance newsletters dealing with such topics as (1) professional renewal opportunities, (2) new materials on the market, and (3) promising guidance practices.
- Establish a free phone communication system for schools within the jurisdiction.
- Collect and distribute to local schools materials and event brochures obtained from attendance at national and/or state conferences.
- Develop state and/or federal guidance proposals directed towards rural school programs or material improvement.

State Education Agencies

- Develop a state career information resource center.
- Establish a statewide communications network which incorporates services described in this report.
- Promote local school personnel visitations to exemplary career guidance program demonstration sites.

- Identify exemplary career guidance programs within the state and encourage high visibility of these programs.

- Assist local school districts in identifying and acquiring funding sources for career guidance efforts.

- Encourage state subject matter specialists to incorporate career guidance objectives and information into state curriculum guides.

- Develop and disseminate calendars of forthcoming professional meetings related to career guidance.

- Identify career related materials and services of other state agencies such as the state employment service and communicate information about these materials and services.

- Encourage greater assistance to local districts by the state's counselor education institution.

- Develop strong working relationships with the Employment Security Office with hopes that their resources can be allocated to local rural schools.

- Conduct an annual rural and small school guidance program and material fair at state expense.

U.S. Office of Education and Other Federal Agencies

- Provide financial support for the establishment and maintenance of a national career guidance communication network for rural and small schools.

- Promote research on the relative effectiveness of various modes of communicating with rural and small schools.

- Foster the continuation of existing practices which effectively communicate to rural and small schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Rural Career Guidance Communication Network
Information Request Form

1. Your position is:

   Administrator _____ Counselor _____
   Teacher _____ Other (please specify)_____

2. Your school is located in what state? _____

3. Are you or others in your school currently using career guidance materials developed outside of your school district? Yes_____ No _____

   If yes,

   a. Approximately how many _____
   b. What types of materials do you use (films, books, kits, etc.)

   _____

   _____

4. Do you feel that you and others in your school are sufficiently aware of current career guidance materials and methods available nationally? Yes_____ No _____

   If no, what do you think is the major reason(s) why you are not aware of this information?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. Do you and others learn of career guidance materials through:

Journals _____
State Departments of Education _____
National conventions _____
State conventions _____
Local conferences _____
Other educators _____

Universities _____
Commercial firms _____
National associations _____
State associations _____
Newsletters _____
Others (please specify) _____

Comments: _____

6. If they were made available to you, which of the following services would you or others in your school district use?

Toll-free telephone consultation service _____
Area consultants at local school cost _____
Newsletters _____
List of nearby rural guidance demonstration sites _____
List of national rural guidance demonstration sites _____
Audiovisual presentation on promising career development practices _____
Regional workshops _____
Monographs on guidance issues _____
Packets of information on career development materials _____
Others (please specify) _____

7. Which of the following would you be interested in learning about through a rural career guidance communications network?

Career guidance, counseling, and placement materials developed by other rural schools _____
Community relations materials for rural schools _____
Materials or ideas for implementing career guidance in the: classroom _____
home _____
community _____

Staff development information on how to implement career guidance, counseling, and placement program _____

Ideas for a placement program _____

Materials developed by: national research and development centers _____

the National Institute of Education _____

the U.S. Office of Education _____

State Departments of Education _____

national associations _____

career education directors in rural schools _____

commercial firms _____

Others (please specify) _____

_____

_____

8. Please provide any additional advice we might be able to use in our attempt to develop a communication system to meet your needs.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Note: If you have any guidance, counseling, and placement program materials that you would like us to place in our national rural guidance library for others to view and use please enclose or send under separate cover.

Return to: Karen S. Kimmel
The Center for Vocational Education
1960 Kenny Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

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APPENDIX B

Rural Career Guidance Communication Network
Information Request Form

1. Your position is:

   _____ Administrator
   _____ Teacher
   _____ Counselor
   _____ Coordinator Pupil Personnel Services
   _____ Other (please specify) _____

2. Your school/agency is located in what state? _____

3. Check the type(s) of information and referrals you would like to obtain through the mail and/or through a toll-free telephone service.

   Information about:

   _____ Planning comprehensive career guidance and counseling programs
   _____ Implementing comprehensive career guidance and counseling programs
   _____ Evaluating comprehensive career guidance and counseling programs
   _____ Strategies for infusing career guidance into curriculum
   _____ Techniques for involving parents in the career development of youth
   _____ Ideas for school-community cooperation
   _____ Ideas for a placement program
   _____ Ideas for a career counseling program
   _____ Planning and operating career resource centers
   _____ Strategies for staff development programs
   _____ Conducting local career development needs assessment
   _____ Assessing local resources
   _____ Materials developed by other schools
   _____ Models of comprehensive career guidance programs
   _____ Possibilities for getting career guidance efforts funded
   _____ Innovative career guidance practices
   _____ Guidance legislation (state, federal)
   _____ Research on rural and small school youth

_____ Research on rural and small schools
_____ Student career guidance materials
_____ Others (please specify) _____

_____

Referrals to:

_____ Potential consultants
_____ Rural and small schools with effective programs
_____ Inservice opportunities
_____ State agencies (education, employment, etc.)
_____ Counselor education programs
_____ Information centers (e.g., ERIC)
_____ Others (please specify) _____

_____

4. Please rank in order of importance the services that would be most valuable to you (1 = most important).

_____ Toll-free telephone line
_____ Workshops
_____ Newsletters
_____ Information packet
_____ Consultant listing
_____ Demonstration programs

5. Please rank in order the type(s) of information you would like to see appear in newsletters.

_____ Innovative career guidance activities/ideas used in rural schools
_____ Announcements of upcoming conferences, seminars, workshops on the topic of career guidance
_____ Announcements of free materials
_____ References to new materials on the market
_____ Innovative ideas for career guidance programs
_____ Information about preservice training programs
_____ Others (please specify) _____

_____

6. If information packets that describe guidance and counseling materials, techniques, and other resources were made available free of charge, what would you suggest they contain? Please rank order.

_____ Brochures on new career guidance materials
_____ Brief descriptions of materials developed by rural schools
_____ Posters
_____ Bulletin board materials/ideas
_____ Bookmarks
_____ Student handout materials
_____ Directories (rural schools, consultants)
_____ Others (please specify) _____

_____

7. If consultants (e.g., counselor educators, state department supervisors, experienced school counselors) were identified in your geographic area, what would be the three priority ways in which you would involve them?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

8. If workshops were made available to you, what information would you like to receive? Please rank order your top five (5) priorities.

_____ How to systematically plan, develop, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive career guidance and counseling program.
_____ How to effectively involve the community in a career guidance program.
_____ How to plan and operate a career resource center.
_____ How to communicate the program to the community.
_____ How to eliminate sex and racial stereotyping in the school.
_____ How to provide inservice education to staff on the concepts and activities related to guidance.
_____ Specific classroom activities for elementary, junior high, and senior high students.
_____ Others (please specify) _____

_____

Thank you for your assistance in the planning of this project. We look forward to serving you.

Please return this form in the enclosed envelope by **OCTOBER 21, 1977.**

NOTE: If you have any guidance, counseling, and placement program materials that you would like us to place in our national rural guidance library or to describe in our future newsletters, please enclose or send under separate cover.

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This rural school guidance project represents an effort to build upon the unique strengths of the rural settings and to overcome the information, training and consultation problems faced by educators, parents, counselors, employers, community agencies and students in rural schools and communities. The National Advisory Committee is designed to provide assessment, reaction and advice to the relevance and feasibility of the communication network processes, products and services generated as a result of this project. Individuals serving on this committee were selected for their national recognition for work within their professions. Primary emphasis on the committee is given to education, business, labor, and counseling and guidance.

Dr. Martin Essex: Former Ohio State Superintendent of Education, currently Executive Director of the Ohio State Advisory Council for Vocational Education, Columbus, Ohio.

Mr. Bruce Kingery: Labor representative, International Union, UAW, Detroit, Michigan

Dr. George Leonard: Counselor Educator, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

Mr. Melvin McCutchan: Business representative, Sandia Laboratories, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dr. Marla Peterson: Director, ERIC/Career Education, The Center for Vocational Education, Columbus, Ohio

Dr. Barbara Thompson: Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction, Madison, Wisconsin

Mr. Gaylord Unbehaun: Superintendent of Schools, Brillion, Wisconsin

Dr. Gary Walz: Director, ERIC/CAPS, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan